

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: POINTS OF INTERSECTION: HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN KENT COUNTY, MARYLAND AND PLANNING FOR THE CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH CHESAPEAKE NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

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In October 2006 the commissioners of Kent County, Maryland, enacted legislation establishing an Historic Preservation Commission. Earlier in 2006, Kent County prepared a comprehensive management plan that included a chapter addressing historic preservation issues.

On December 19, 2006, the National Trails System Act was amended to designate the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail (CAJO), the first completely water-based trail in the national parks system. During 2008 and 2009, the National Park Service is creating its comprehensive plan for the management and use of the trail. The NPS depends on partnerships with public and private entities at the local and regional level to help create such a plan.

Therefore, a primary research question is the extent to which Kent County can concentrate historic preservation efforts to complement CAJO planning. This study will examine opportunities available to the County in historic site preservation as they relate to the development of CAJO.

POINTS OF INTERSECTION:
HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN KENT COUNTY, MARYLAND, AND
PLANNING FOR THE CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH
CHESAPEAKE NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

By

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	v
List of Figures	vi
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Federal Planning for the Trail	4
Chapter 2: Local Efforts in Historic Preservation	8
Chapter 3: Points of Intersection	15
Chapter 4: Making Connections	23
Chapter 5: Recommendations	31
Appendices	38
Bibliography	40

List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Captain Smith's 1607/1608 voyages	17
Figure 1.2 Close-up of 1608 entrance into Sassafra River	18

Introduction

In May 2006, Kent County, Maryland prepared a comprehensive management plan in accordance with the provisions of section 3.08 of Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland. The purpose of the plan was to outline “County direction, policy, and action regarding land use.”¹ Land use planning is to be directed by goals and strategies addressing eight areas of Kent County life: economy, towns and villages, countryside, environment, housing, transportation, community facilities and public services, and historic and cultural preservation. This last area, historic preservation, not only received its own chapter in the plan but its value was also mentioned in conjunction with all but one of the other areas.

In October 2006 the commissioners of Kent County, Maryland, enacted legislation establishing an Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). Before this, no local government agency with an interest in historic sites preservation existed in Kent County outside the Chestertown historic district. This preservation ordinance provides a process and criteria for designation of “historic sites, structures, and districts of historical, archeological, or architectural significance”² to a local register and outlines procedures for reviewable actions by the HPC. With these two documents, the ordinance and the comprehensive management plan, Kent County seems prepared to take advantage of opportunities in historic preservation activities.

¹ Kent County, Maryland, Comprehensive Plan

² Bill 3-2006, Kent County, Maryland

Also in 2006, something was happening on the federal level which could become a preservation opportunity for Kent County. United States Senators Paul Sarbanes of Maryland and John Warner of Virginia offered legislation to designate the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail (CAJO). On December 19, 2006, President Bush signed into law H.R.5466, amending the National Trails System Act to designate this first completely water-based trail in the national parks system. In the spring of 2008, the National Park Service has begun creating its comprehensive plan for the management and use of the trail.

The trail follows the voyages of Captain John Smith in 1607 and 1608 in his explorations of the Chesapeake Bay. From the James River in Virginia to the Susquehanna at the northern end of the Bay, the trail is a circuit of the Chesapeake Bay with extensions up several river tributaries. One such extension is the Sassafras River which marks the northern boundary of Kent County. (The county seat of Chestertown is on the Chester River which serves as the southern boundary of the County. There is currently no planned extension of the trail into the Chester River).

The NPS depends largely on partnerships with public and private entities at the local and regional level to help create each National Historic Trail's management plan. Kent County offices such as the Departments of Planning & Zoning, Recreation & Parks, and Tourism should work with the NPS on the larger project but the County also has an opportunity to be instrumental in presenting its own vision for the segment of the trail that touches on the County.

Therefore, a primary research question of this paper is the extent to which Kent County can concentrate historic preservation efforts in a way that complements

CAJO planning. To that end, this study will examine the opportunities available to the County in historic site preservation, particularly as they relate to the development of CAJO, and will develop suggestions for Kent County's participation in the overall CAJO planning.

To conduct research for this paper, I employed a variety of methods to collect data. I studied the statutes and regulations at the federal level, for the designation of CAJO to the National Trails System Act, and at the local level, for Kent County's historic preservation ordinance along with the County's 2006 comprehensive plan. I attended a National Park Service Gateways interpretive planning meeting in Rappahannock Virginia. Finally, I conducted a variety of interviews, in person, by email, and by telephone, of stakeholders in the project.

In Chapter 1 of this research paper, I will discuss the requirements of the federal legislation designating the historic trail. I will then examine Kent County's recent efforts in comprehensive management planning and the impact on local historic preservation planning in Chapter 2. Federal trail planning and local planning can be demonstrated to overlap at several points and will be illustrated in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 discusses the connections that can be made from points of intersection between non-governmental partners, local goals, and federal goals. Finally, Chapter 5 presents several recommendations for implementing programs and procedures at the local level to maximize participation in trail planning.

Chapter 1: Federal Planning for the Trail

This paper examines the extent to which Kent County, Maryland, can complement federal planning for the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail with its own historic preservation efforts as outlined in the County's comprehensive management plan. To do that, a detailed explanation of the federal planning process for the trail is required.

On December 19, 2006, President Bush signed into law H.R.5466, amending the National Trails System Act to designate the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, the first completely water-based trail in the National Parks System. The National Trails System Act (hereon referred to as "The Act") of 1968 was created to provide a trails system to satisfy "the ever-increasing outdoor recreation needs of an expanding population and in order to promote the preservation of, public access to, travel within, and enjoyment and appreciation of the open-air, outdoor areas and historic resources of the Nation"³. Three types of trails are covered by the Act: scenic, recreation, and historic. Twenty-five trails have been named to date, the most recent of which is the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail (CAJO) which is established in Section 5(a)(25).

Section 5(a)(25)(A) describes the route of CAJO as,

"a series of water routes extending approximately 3,000 miles along the Chesapeake Bay and the tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay in the

³ National Trails System Act of 1968, Section 2(a)

States of Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware, and in the District of Columbia, that traces the 1607-1609 voyages of Captain John Smith to chart the land and waterways of the Chesapeake Bay.”

The Act further specifies that the Secretary of the Interior (through its agency, the National Park Service) will administer this trail with these partners:

“in *coordination* with the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network authorized under the Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act of 1998 (16 U.S.C. 461 note; 112 Stat.2961); and the Chesapeake Bay Program authorized under section 117 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S. C. 1267); and in *consultation* with other Federal, State, tribal, regional, and local agencies; and the private sector.”⁴ (italics added)

The Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network was founded through an act of Congress in 1998, the Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act, which gave the National Park Service the authority to create a linked network of trails and access points to the Chesapeake Bay. In 1983, the Chesapeake Bay Program was founded by Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania to foster the health and protection of Bay waters. In 1987, legislation was passed enabling the Environmental Protection Agency to coordinate federal and interstate efforts to improve water quality through a Chesapeake Bay Program Office.

The National Trails System Act specifies that a comprehensive plan for management of the trail needs to be written within two fiscal years of the addition of the trail; that is, by June 30, 2009. The coordinating agencies, the Chesapeake Bay

⁴ National Trails System Act of 1968, Sec.5 (a)(25) (C)

Gateways and Watertrails Network (hereon referred to as “Gateways Network”) and the Chesapeake Bay Program are instructed to consult with other governmental agencies as well as the private sector during the comprehensive management planning efforts. Those efforts engage public and private partners in two series of meetings. The first, a series of interpretive planning meetings held between September 2007 and March, 2008 were exploratory in nature and served to identify interpretive themes, identify trail visitor opportunities, and identify additional partners. An expanded list of organizations will be invited to participate in more detailed planning meetings to discuss the specifics of the comprehensive management plan. Those meetings are planned for summer, 2008.

In documents emailed to participants in advance of interpretive planning meetings, the National Park Service described the goal of the trail as an effort to foster citizen stewardship of the Bay. Furthermore, the NPS defined three themes to guide the interpretive process for the trail:

- (a) John Smith’s voyages around the Bay
- (b) Native American culture and society (then and now)
- (c) The natural environment of the Bay (then and now)⁵

Thus, the federal emphases for the trail are clear: a focus on the historic aspect of the trail, specific attention to American Indian cultures present (then and now) in the trail area, and historic and contemporary environmental conditions of the Bay.

Eleven interpretive meetings were held in various locations around the Bay in Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware with the most convenient, geographically, to Kent

⁵ Rod Torrez, National Park Service, in an interpretive planning meeting at Rappahannock, Virginia on February 26, 2008.

County, Maryland being held on February 13th in Grasonville on Kent Island, a 30 minute drive from the county seat of Chestertown. Meetings are led by employees of the NPS Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network office in Annapolis, Maryland. At these meetings, the NPS typically takes the participants through brain-storming sessions on ideas for stories, places, visitor opportunities and experiences, potential partners, and early implementation. Ideas elicited during the session are written on large tablets and displayed around the conference room. A representative from the Kent County Department of Recreation and Parks was invited but did not attend. This absence might indicate a lack of perceived value to the County of federal efforts in trail planning. In the next chapter, I will discuss the steps Kent County has taken to recognize its own historical, archaeological, and cultural resources.

Chapter 2: Local Efforts in Historic Preservation

In the last chapter, I described the federal legislation of 2006 designating the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. Earlier that year, but from an unrelated effort, the Board of County Commissioners in Kent County, Maryland approved a vision for County land use planning that recognized the County's historic resources. In order to argue that Kent County had reached an awareness of its historic resources, an awareness instrumental to efforts in promoting itself for Trail planning purposes, I will provide in this chapter an overview of County actions acknowledging historic preservation.

In May 2006, Kent County prepared a comprehensive plan in accordance with Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland, and in October 2006 the county Commissioners enacted legislation establishing an Historic Preservation Commission. Before then, only the county seat of Chestertown had enacted a preservation ordinance to protect properties in its National Register Historic District. In the Department of Planning & Zoning's comprehensive plan, two goals and thirteen strategies are outlined which specifically address preservation issues. Some of them connect this preservation activity to the further development of heritage tourism activities. Comprehensive Management Plan strategies, quoted from the County's plan, include:

- ❖ Commit to preserving County-owned cultural and historic structures and sites
- ❖ Promote preservation of the County's archaeological resources
- ❖ Work with local organizations to gather oral histories

- ❖ Promote community awareness of local culture and history through the development of educational programs
- ❖ Encourage development of heritage-related services as supplemental sources of income

In addition to Historic Preservation, seven other areas were addressed in the comprehensive plan: economy, towns and villages, countryside, environment, housing, transportation, and community facilities and public services.

Preservation issues are repeated in subject areas such as economy (“link cultural heritage and tourism”), towns and villages (“historic preservation promotes the revitalization of our towns, villages, and insures a sense of community”), countryside (“define scenic viewsheds and develop guidelines to protect most threatened views”), environment (closing a list of natural resources important to Kent County are “historic sites, dark nighttime skies and a peaceful, unhurried atmosphere”), transportation (“explore options to preserve historic and scenic resources along transportation corridors”), and in the subject area focusing on community facilities and public services. This last one bears special mention here because two important preservation issues are listed as County strategies. First, a strategy to preserve County-owned historic structures and sites is touted as a way for the County to “set the example for preservation . . . through designation, maintenance, and compatible use”⁶. Second, a strategy to promote awareness of historic resources in the County is developed as a cooperative venture with the Board of Education and local preservation groups to provide opportunities for students and adults. In addition, this strategy seeks to “encourage the

⁶ Kent County comprehensive plan, p. 64

development of a preservation/restoration component in the building trades' vocational education program.”⁷ It is significant that, in addition to the thorough goals and strategies outlined in the Historic Preservation section, the comprehensive plan also includes references to preservation in every other section of the report except “housing”. Of particular interest is the repetition of the strategy involving a commitment to preserving County-owned properties. It is clear that preservation issues were a particularly strong force in guiding the development of this comprehensive plan.

Kent County has a wealth of historic, cultural, and archaeological resources including many National Register and Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties sites. A map of Kent County showing these sites is included in the Appendix. Historic resources include 18th- and 19th-century residences and churches, structures related to African-American history and culture, two National Register Historic Districts, and Native American archaeological sites.

In October 2006, Kent County enacted legislation (Bill 3-2006) which created an Historic Preservation Commission. The ordinance gave authority to the Commission to make recommendations for designations to the local register (with the permission of the property owner), and to review actions that may affect protected resources. When designation is sought for a property, the HPC holds a hearing and makes a recommendation which it then forwards to the Department of Planning & Zoning. The Planning department then makes its own recommendation and forwards both to the Board of County Commissioners who make the final decision. So far, two properties have been designated and a third is waiting for approval from the Board of

⁷ Kent County comprehensive plan, p. 64

County Commissioners. All three of these properties are privately owned. As of May 18, 2008, the Commission had not yet prepared a recommendation for any County-owned properties.

The HPC has the authority, but is not required, to conduct a survey of significant historical, archaeological, and cultural resources. One of the strategies in the comprehensive plan approach to historic preservation alludes to past surveys and the identification of threatened resources. The document also refers to the work of a Heritage Preservation Advisory Council and mentions a future “Heritage Preservation Plan”. The preservation ordinance did not make the HPC responsible for keeping a survey of resources no matter which organization is ultimately tasked with its completion.

The ordinance contains a provision of applicability which states that the provisions will apply only to unincorporated towns or villages in the County. In a county of approximately 20,000 people, there are five incorporated towns: Galena, Millington, Rock Hall, Betterton, and Chestertown. The last two of these have designated National Historic Districts. This limitation impacts the effectiveness and reach of Kent County’s Historic Preservation Commission.

An additional limitation on the effectiveness of the preservation ordinance is the reliance on voluntary measures to designate properties. No property may be nominated to the local register without the consent of the property owner. A close reading of the comprehensive plan bolsters the hope that the local register can at least be supplemented with County-owned properties because of stated commitments to do so. “The County will set the example for preservation of historic and cultural

structures and sites through designation, maintenance, and compatible use of County-owned sites and areas.”⁸ However, in a telephone conversation with community planner Carla Gerber, she stated that nominations of County-owned properties will not even be considered “under the present Board of County Commissioners.”⁹ By way of explanation, Ms. Gerber stated that the County does not want to put itself in the position of complying with the restrictions placed on locally designated properties. In addition to other responsibilities in the Department of Planning & Zoning, Ms. Gerber serves as administrative staff for the Historic Preservation Commission. There is an obvious disconnect between statements in the County’s comprehensive management plan and Ms. Gerber’s understanding of current and future activities of the Commission. If these surprising statements by Ms. Gerber reflect the truth, then the HPC will damage its ability to build a meaningful local register by setting an example for County citizens.

On the other hand, statements in the County’s comprehensive plan concerning the importance of the County’s agricultural legacy are actively supported with measures to protect farmland and guard against loss of land to non-agricultural development. Over 8,000 acres of farmland and woodland are protected through conservation easements with the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy and the Maryland Environmental Trust. In addition, preservation easements are purchased to create “Agricultural Security Corridors” in partnership with Cecil County to the north. For instance, approximately 7,500 acres are protected in a Sassafras River Rural Legacy

⁸ Kent County comprehensive plan.

⁹ Telephone conversation with Carla Gerber, April 29, 2008.

Area as part of one of these corridors.¹⁰ The Kent County website describes this Area as a “rolling landscape support[ing] working family farmers, dairy herds, and crops of corn, soybeans, wheat and small grains” and the viewsheds as “the most pristine and spectacular views of the upper Bay from bluffs up to 80 feet high.”¹¹

The Comprehensive Plan calls for “Rural Historic Districts” to be created while the preservation ordinance calls for preservation of “familiar visual features”. With an ordinance dependent on voluntary participation, and a reluctance to designate County-owned properties, the establishment of these Rural Historic Districts, which may overlay lands held under easement, is not being actively pursued.

One federal program in which Kent County participates is the National Scenic Byways Program. Route 213 linking Chestertown in the southwest with Georgetown in the northeast portion of the county is part of the Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway. The national program’s website directs visitors with tour suggestions¹² and in the County’s comprehensive plan, under the “Economy” area, is listed a strategy to promote this Scenic Byway.

Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area is a state of Maryland program in which Kent County participates and is also designed to increase heritage tourism. That program is administered under the Maryland Heritage Areas Program and includes Queen Anne’s, Caroline, and Talbot Counties. The mission of the program

¹⁰ <http://www.kentcounty.com/gov/planzone/legacy.htm>

¹¹ <http://www.kentcounty.com/gov/planzone/legacy.htm>

¹² <http://www.byways.org/explore/byways/2261/>

is to improve the “visitor experience” in the region while seeking to maintain and extend visitor experiences.¹³

As we have seen in this chapter, Kent County recognizes the value of historic preservation and has recently initiated attempts to protect its historic resources. This is a positive step and can be bolstered by participating in federal planning for the Captain John Smith Trail. In the next chapter, I will illustrate several partnerships in which the county can engage to supplement public action.

¹³ <http://www.anuntangledweb.com/SOTC/MORE4.ASPX?theme=theme4>

Chapter 3: Points of Intersection

In chapter 1, I discussed the federal government's planning process for development of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. In chapter 2, I examined the recent efforts made by Kent County local government to safeguard its historic resources through management planning and preservation ordinances. In this chapter, I will demonstrate how and where those two endeavors can intersect. Points of intersection should serve as primary focus areas for Kent County as it moves toward preservation strategies that complement federal planning for CAJO.

First, those endeavors intersect in time. Federal planning for the Trail and local attention to resource preservation are happening at the same time. Federal designation of the Trail occurred in late 2006. Also in 2006, Kent County published a county comprehensive management plan with a strong chapter focusing on historic preservation and passed a preservation ordinance encouraging voluntary designation of historic, archaeological, and cultural resources to a local register. However, while the federal process is on a straight path which will not be derailed, local efforts have been "in word" but not "in deed", and, attention to historic preservation through voluntary private action easily loses its momentum.

Second, federal and local endeavors do intersect on the shore in Kent County's Turner's Creek Park. Turner's Creek Park is located on the Sassafras River in northern Kent County. Kent County is not only "along the path" of Captain John

Smith's voyages around the Bay in 1607 and 1608; the 1608 voyage included exploration of the Sassafras River which marks Kent County's northern border.

The following two maps illustrate the physical point of intersection between CAJO planning and Kent County. Figure 1.1 shows the routes of Captain John Smith's voyages in 1607 and 1608. Noted on this map are the Chesapeake Bay Gateway sites which include Turner's Creek County Park in Kent County. Figure 1.2 provides a close-up of the upper Chesapeake spotlighting Kent County and Captain Smith's voyage into the Sassafras River marking the county's northern boundary.

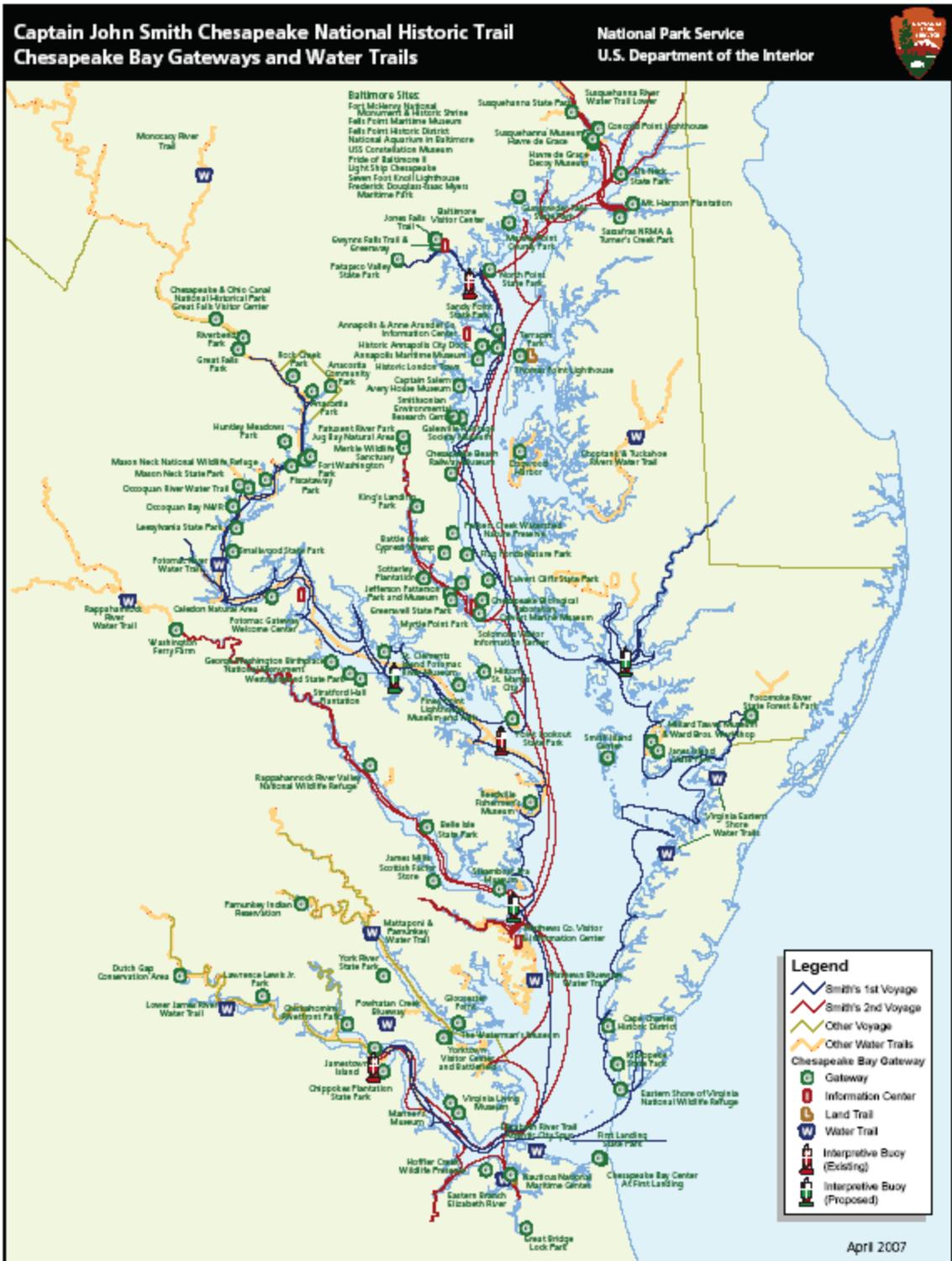


Figure 1.1 Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail,
www.nps.gov/cajo

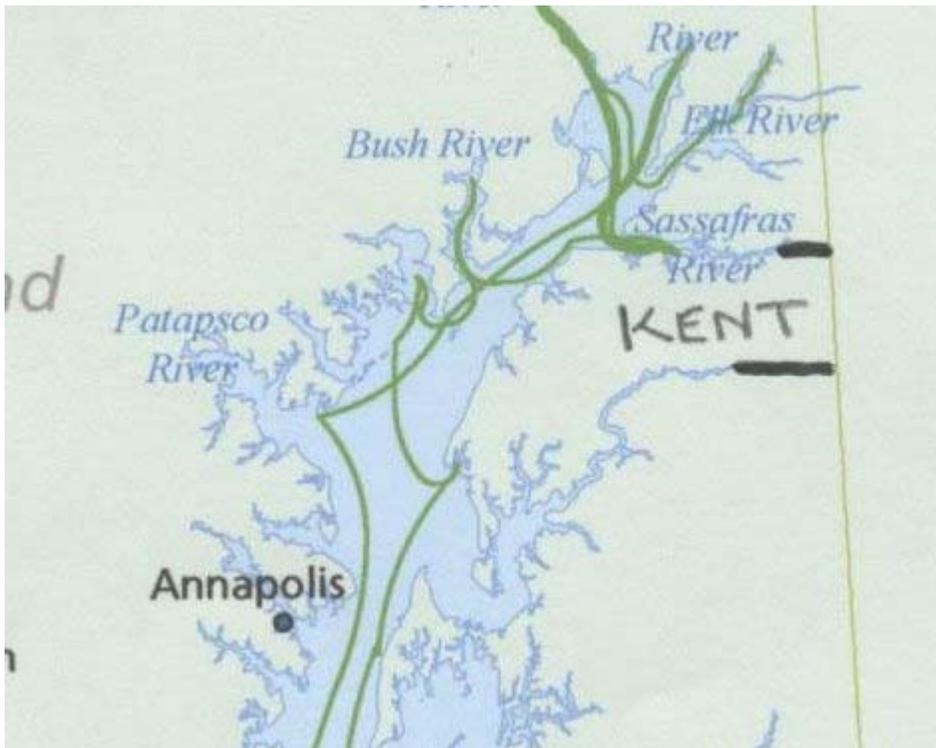


Figure 1.2, close-up of NPS map highlighting Kent County on the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Captain John Smith's voyage into the Sassafraz River.

At Turner's Creek Park, all three of the Trail's interpretive themes, the natural environment of the Bay, Smith's voyages, and Native American culture and society, can be significantly highlighted. First, the park contains a soil conservation and instruction area and is adjacent to the Sassafras River Management Area, a wildlife site managed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Second, figure 1.2 shows that Smith's second voyage explored the Sassafras River marking the County's northern boundary. Interpretive materials can easily cite Smith's own words about his experiences on the Sassafras. Third, Smith traveled up the Sassafras to the site of an American Indian village.

Entering the river of the Tockwogh [Sassafras], the savages all armed, in a fleet of boats, after their barbarous manner, round environed us. So it chanced one of them could speak the language of Powhatan, who persuaded the rest to a friendly parley. But when they saw us furnished with the Massawomecks' weapons, and we, feigning the invention of Kecoughtan, to have taken them perforce, they conducted us to their palisaded town, mantled with the barks of trees, with scaffolds like mounts, brested about with brests very formally. Their men, women, and children with dances, songs, fruits, furs, and what they had, kindly welcomed us, spreading mats for us to sit on, stretching their best abilities to express their loves.¹⁴

In this passage, the Massawomeck Indians mentioned by Smith were enemies of the Tockwogh. The "invention of Kecoughtan" refers to an experience early in the voyage, near

¹⁴ Thompson, John M., editor, *The Journals of Captain John Smith: A Jamestown Biography*, 2007, Washington D.C.: National Geographic Society, p. 73.

the village of Kecoughtan in the lower Chesapeake, when Smith's possession of some weapons belonging to one tribe were seen by another tribe as evidence that Smith had beaten them in battle. When the Tockwogh saw Smith with Massowomeck weapons, they took him to be friendly, or at least, not allied with their enemy. Smith stayed several days in the first week of August, 1608, in the palisaded town of Tockwogh. The location of that town is not known today.

Very little is known of the American Indian population in Kent County at the time of Smith's explorations, or of their history post-contact. In the mid-to-late 17th century, an industry in beaver pelt procurement was present in the Upper Chesapeake peninsula with colonial settlers trading with Native American populations. Little was recorded about the subsequent disbursement of those populations and today Maryland does not recognize any American Indian tribes. Any archaeological research the County could engage in could add significant data to the post-contact period and would be appreciated by the National Park Service in its interpretation efforts for the Trail.

The federal Chesapeake Gateways Network intends to use its "gateway sites" to support CAJO planning. Turner's Creek Park has already been made a Gateways site in the network. The park is a logical point of access for the Trail with many features that are attractive to federal planning efforts. First, a public boat ramp is available with ample parking for visitors who trailer their boats or use canoes and kayaks. Second, a large sheltered cove can accommodate visitors who arrive by water. Third, hiking trails and overlooks are found at the Park and adjoining Maryland-owned Sassafras Natural Resource Management Area. At the same time,

Turner's Creek County Park contains several historic structures: Knocks Folly (Maryland Register site K-114 and on the National Register of Historic Places), the Lathim House (K-115), and the Granary (K-122). The latter two are owned by Kent County and the Lathim House has been fitted with public restroom facilities. A museum dedicated to the curation of the County's agricultural history, the Kent County Farm Museum also sits on this site. In addition to structures, commercial watermen still use the bulkhead and piers to moor their working boats. These vessels and the gear the watermen use in their livelihoods are cultural resource artifacts of the County's maritime trades.

National Register landmarks and districts and close to 700 Maryland Register historic sites are scattered throughout Kent County. The National Trails System Act permits secondary trails to be a part of CAJO. Route 213, which bisects the county running northeast from Chestertown to Georgetown, is a National Scenic Byway. An important point to remember is that, though this is a water-based trail, points on the trail will need to be accessed from, and strengthened by, components that can be created in surrounding land areas.

Kent County's management plan calls for ways to increase heritage tourism and the economic benefits that come with it. CAJO, gateway sites, Kent County's inventory of historic sites, growing popularity of water-based recreation such as kayaking and paddling, all converge to provide an opportunity for heritage tourism. Public access to waterways will be very important to NPS planners. Kent County offers good public access from several points, some with ample parking for vehicles. While Turner's Creek Park offers the most complete assemblage of features sought

out in federal planning, several other locations bear exploration as potential future sites: Betteron Beach and Georgetown on the Sassafras, and Still Pond and Rock Hall on the Chesapeake. A chart of public access sites is included in the Appendix.

Each county and each state affected by the designation of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail has an opportunity to participate in CAJO planning. The federal government is required to consult with local governments and private citizens. The Annapolis office of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways program has the lead in federal planning for CAJO. In advance of its interpretive planning meetings, county officials, quasi-public, and private organizations were notified of meeting dates and were sent the agenda and other preparatory information via email. For the meeting on Kent Island in Queen Anne's County, no invited County officials from Kent County attended. In summer, 2008, the Gateways office will hold additional planning meetings, these to gather and discuss ideas for the trail's comprehensive management plan. Once again, Kent County officials will be welcome to attend. Kent County can be positively affected during this federal planning stage and there are many points of intersection between local goals and federal goals. It is in the County's best interests to attend this meeting and use it to develop the partnerships it will need when it plans for stewardship of its historic, archaeological, and cultural resources. The next chapter will examine some of those possible partnerships.

Chapter 4: Making Connections

The federal government recognizes that governmental action alone does not suffice in building a management plan and supporting a national historic trail. Section 2 of The National Trails System Act states, “. . . it is further the purpose of this Act to encourage and assist volunteer citizen involvement in the planning, development, maintenance, and management, where appropriate, of trails. Perhaps the lead private organization whose efforts were largely responsible for the designation is the Friends of the Captain John Smith Trail. A very important private partner with the Friends in a major marketing effort to build awareness of the Trail is the Sultana Project, based in Kent County’s seat of Chestertown. Sultana built a replica shallop and sailed it in summer, 2007, with crew in a four month long trip retracing John Smith’s first Chesapeake voyage in 1607. Associations advocating bicycling activities, boating, wildlife and forest conservation, tourism, and working watermen are partners and supporters of CAJO with the Friends group. These organizations have resources in membership and outreach that broaden the marketing reach of trail organizers. Similarly, Kent County would be wise to develop partnerships and look for models of similar planning when considering how it can direct preservation efforts in a way that complements CAJO planning. In this chapter, I will provide a framework for organizing the types of partnerships the County could invite and discuss the principle supporting the framework.

Kent County’s comprehensive management plan of 2006 is a document designed to address a vision of the future and to direct land use planning towards the goals and strategies outlined in the plan. I have already explained in chapter two the strong emphasis on historic preservation in the plan. Throughout the plan, preservation is often linked with tourism as an economic driver and as a motivator for preservation efforts. The following excerpts from the comprehensive management plan illustrate this point:

From the “Historic and Cultural Preservation” section:

“The economic value of historic preservation has been proven again and again; it increases property values and provides for heritage tourism, the cleanest of clean industries.”

From the “Economy” section, sub-section “Tourism”:

“Projects and publications which link cultural heritage and tourism have the potential to become important components in the County’s tourism program.”

From the “Towns and Villages” section:

“Historic preservation promotes the revitalization of our towns, villages, and insures a sense of community. Economic benefits can be realized through increased property values and preservation of resources to support heritage tourism.”¹⁵

¹⁵ Kent County comprehensive plan

Kent County could think through the coalition-building process through the lens of heritage tourism. Potential partners have been grouped into five categories, each of which represents a different stakeholder in the outcome or participant in the process.

Public:

County actions (or inactions) affect County residents. Residents are legitimate stakeholders in the development of heritage tourism activities and are directly affected by visitor impacts. Communication with residents is important and instructive. Not only is it prudent to give notice of County activity, citizens can have an opportunity to participate in tourism development, to have the right to be heard, and to have an affect on the political process. Media partners such as the Kent County News provide a way for the County to reach out to residents.

Besides County residents, outside visitors who constitute potential heritage tourists are the second group considered “public”. Trade associations representing recreational activities have mechanisms for reaching both residents and visitors. Of particular importance would be organizations whose constituents are boaters. The Stories of the Chesapeake program, which encompasses Kent County, should be seen as a logical partner because of its emphasis on communicating heritage tourism to a visiting public.

Academic:

The public school system in the County is a potential partner with whom the County could develop ideas to incorporate local history components in the curriculum, including field trips to historic structures and districts. At the college level, Washington College in Chestertown has developed a significant archaeology program led by Professor John Seidel. His work can be instrumental in helping the County identify significant archaeological sites for preservation and in developing interpretation for those sites.

The members of the Historic Preservation Commission are internal partners in the process. As required by the preservation ordinance, members are professionals with areas of expertise on which the County could draw.

Volunteers:

According to Tim Barrett, Chesapeake consultant for Friends of the John Smith Trail, successful trails have a cadre of volunteers.¹⁶ Volunteers may come from anywhere but there are certain organizations that can offer better opportunities for volunteer recruitment. The Kent County Historical Society has a long record of championing historic resources in the County. It would make sense to rely on them. As stewards of the natural environment of the Sassafras River watershed, the Sassafras River Association could be asked to partner with the County and should be kept informed of County planning. They are already familiar with CAJO and the Friends of the John Smith Trail.

¹⁶ Telephone interview, May 13, 2008.

This summer, in August, Shrewsbury Church will be holding a special event to commemorate John Smith's visit in the area. Church volunteers have been planning an event featuring participation by historians, archaeologists, and Native Americans.¹⁷ Participants and planners are likely to be interested in County planning efforts moving forward.

The Water and the Land:

Bearing in mind that the Trail is a water-based trail, and the primary point of intersection between federal planning and local preservation efforts I argue is at Turner's Creek Park on the Sassafras River, potential partners with the County need to include commercial and recreational boaters as well as conservation organizations. Of great importance are the commercial watermen who use the pier and bulkhead at the County Park. The Kent County comprehensive management plan addresses this issue:

“In recognition of the importance of commercial watermen, the County will continue to provide conveniently located docking facilities through zoning and the public landings program and will establish a policy that grants priority use of public waterfront access to watermen.”¹⁸

Certainly, the watermen who use Turners Creek Park need to be included in conversations about the potential for increased use by recreational visitors of the dock

¹⁷ www.stardem.com/articles/2008/05/18/life/32855.txt

¹⁸ Kent County comprehensive plan

area there. Watermen's views and ideas will be very important to County approaches towards preservation and CAJO planning.

Additional organizations with an interest in boating use include trade associations such as the American Canoe Association and the Paddlesports Industry Association. These groups will be able to offer exposure through their websites to recreational, quiet-use, boaters.

Bicycling clubs, hiking clubs, birding clubs, and organizations advocating other outdoor activities have resources the County may find helpful. In addition, private groups with a mission of environmental conservation can be a source of volunteers, ideas, and marketing reach.

Guides

Consultation with peers in similar areas or circumstances may be instructive for Kent County. By building relationships with other water trails in Eastern Shore counties, Kent County officials can benefit from those experiences in planning CAJO access at Turner's Creek and other venues. One such example of a nearby water trail system is the Choptank and Tuckahoe Rivers Water Trail, an NPS Gateways site, in Caroline and Talbot Counties.

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources administers the SassafRAS River Management Area adjacent to Turner's Creek Park. The DNR is a likely partner to include in conversations about trail resources.

The Conservation Fund has been involved in CAJO planning since the initial work was performed to create political support for designation of the Trail. Tim

Barrett of the Conservation Fund would welcome the opportunity to speak at public meetings in Kent County and also suggests that the county invite the National Park Service to discuss CAJO plans with residents.¹⁹

Seeing these opportunities in terms of heritage tourism makes it easier to develop discussion points for conversations with potential partners. Additional ideas for discussion points can be taken from the NPS agenda for interpretive planning meetings. A document from those meetings lists questions for meeting attendees and can be found in the Appendix.

Increased tourism and tourism experiences are supportive of a “historically preserved” environment, rich in stories. And the opposite is true: an active historic preservation program attracts heritage tourists. The Captain John Smith Trail can augment the rewards, but also the problems, of heritage tourism.

County officials will need to consider and define a successful heritage tourism program. One study of the effects of water trails on local communities shows that paddlers (canoes, and kayaks) spend between \$27 and \$63 each day.²⁰ If success is measured in economic benefits, then the County will need to investigate the points at which tourists have an opportunity to consume. At the same time, it is important to remember that residents are local consumers and to examine what benefits and what costs accrue to resident consumers as a result of heritage tourism.²¹

¹⁹ Telephone interview, Tim Barrett, May 13, 2008.

²⁰ Johnson, Lindsay, MCRP, September 2002. “Case Studies of Water Trail Impacts on Rural Communities”, unpublished, presented for the fulfillment of a masters degree in Community and Regional Planning, University of Oregon

²¹ Personal interview, Erve Chambers, February 14, 2008.

Increased visitor traffic should be expected if the County can develop a meaningful water trail segment in conjunction with CAJO. While many of those visitors will be day trippers, there are boaters and bicyclists interested in extending the length of their trip. Overnight accommodations will have to be considered and advertised. Retail spending from visitors can cause a ripple effect encouraging still more retail services for visitors. Tourists who “discover” the area may begin to consider moving there. In the best scenario, local residents come to appreciate their towns, villages, and countryside even more. This encourages additional incentives for preservation of historic, archaeological, and cultural resources. The tax base increases and economic benefits accrue. Of course, this growth can also affect residents in ways they see as negative: increased traffic, sharing amenities with non-residents, changes to the landscape, and problems with parking availability at public boat ramp points.

In its comprehensive management plan, Kent County embraces the economic development that heritage tourism brings. The Captain John Smith Trail is likely to positively affect the number of visitors to the County for a heritage tourism experience. Now, in the early days of CAJO planning, and in the early days of County awareness of these issues, the County has an opportunity to direct planning to maximize positive effects on citizens, visitors, and infrastructure. Thinking about the visitor experience as a heritage tourism event, the County may see the advantages and timeliness of strengthening its historic preservation program now.

Chapter 5: Recommendations

In the last chapter, I discussed the reliance on private, non-governmental organizations to build and sustain a successful National Historic Trail and I posited that the same held true for Kent County in its approach towards a more meaningful historic preservation experience, especially when using heritage tourism and the Captain John Smith Trail as an infrastructure on which to build support for preservation. In this chapter, I offer recommendations to Kent County for accelerating a preservation approach guided by heritage tourism development and centered on federal planning for the Captain John Smith Trail. These recommendations are presented in three groups: 1) for immediate action in summer, 2008, 2) for implementation in the short-term, before May 2009, and 3) long-term implementation over the next five years.

Four Recommendations for immediate implementation, summer 2008

First, the County should send at least three employees to the Gateways-sponsored management plan meeting for the Captain John Smith Trail. In July, 2008, the Gateways office will hold a series of seven meetings around the Chesapeake Bay watershed to discuss trail planning. Kent County officials from the departments of Planning & Zoning, Tourism, and Parks & Recreation will benefit from the discussions and will make important and useful contacts. Attending this meeting is a significant way for the County to demonstrate interest. Contact information for the Gateways office can be found in the Appendix.

Second, the County should nominate two county-owned properties at Turner's Creek Park to the local register of historic places: the Lathim House and the Granary.

The County expressed a strong intent to “set the example for preservation” in its comprehensive management plan. This should take priority, especially considering that these two properties can become the centerpiece of Trail planning in the County and a gateway for heritage tourism.

Third, the County should resolve to make the Granary a project for stabilization and rehabilitation and begin spending funds immediately on the necessary professional services to accomplish that project. The Granary should be made available for multiple purposes and should keep as much of its historical integrity as possible. This is an interesting site, especially in proximity to the Farm Museum, to interpret the County’s agricultural and maritime history.

Fourth, the County should increase the fee for securing a demolition permit, from the current zero dollar fee to a minimum of \$50. In addition, increase penalties for demolitions without permit, and aggressively collect those penalties. A portion of that additional revenue should be earmarked for the Granary project.

Four recommendations for short-term planning

First, contracts with commercial outfitters to provide bicycling and paddling opportunities at Turner’s Creek should be offered. This can be kept small in order to test for problems and successes but could be in place for weekends in summer, 2009. Commercial watermen who use Turner’s Creek Park should be kept informed of these developments and invited to participate.

Second, the County should initiate conversations with Washington College regarding a survey of archaeological sites at Turner’s Creek. One focus of this archaeological testing could be to survey for possible additions to the local register.

A second focus should be on developing a program in public archaeology in conjunction with on-going archaeology field schools at Turner's Creek Park. The Granary could serve as the site of a remote archaeological field laboratory. This field lab will make it easier for Washington College to process recovered data and also make it easier for the public to access the information and the experience.

Third, the public needs to be informed of these considerations for preservation in conjunction with Trail planning. In addition, residents may want to give feedback. The County may choose to work with the newspaper, Kent County News on a program to meet with residents. Speakers from various organizations such as the NPS Gateways office and the Friends of the Captain John Smith Trail should be invited to speak. Meetings designed to provide information and solicit ideas from residents are also opportunities to educate the public about preservation issues, including designation of historic properties.

Fourth, the County should petition the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association for an interactive buoy at Turner's Creek Cove. These buoys provide water quality and weather conditions data and can be accessed with a cell phone. In addition, the buoys are able to serve as interpretive kiosks for the history of the Captain John Smith Trail. So far, NOAA has three of these buoys in the entire Chesapeake Bay.

Three recommendations for long-term planning:

I have concentrated the focus on the northern section of Kent County bordering the Sassafras River since Turner's Creek Park has the strongest connection to Captain John Smith's voyages and because the Park has the basic amenities in

place to support CAJO planning. Once the Turner's Creek Park project has been successfully implemented, the County can turn its attention to other towns, villages, and sites. Betterton Beach, with its National Historic District and public boat ramp access may be an appropriate focus since it combines preservation opportunities with Trail amenities.

Second, the Kent County comprehensive plan calls for oral history projects to be initiated. Oral histories provide important data for preserving the historical record of a place and serve to give citizens an opportunity to participate in historic preservation efforts. This participation solidifies recognition of the importance of preservation efforts and may help to build momentum for private action in nominations of property to the local register.

Third, Kent County should work to strengthen its historic preservation ordinance. As it is currently written, the ordinance is completely voluntary. Even when the Historic Preservation Commission files an application for an "Area of Special Merit", the property owner must concur with the designation process. Relying on private action to preserve historic resources is a slow and ineffective way to maintain the historic integrity of the cultural environment. In addition, the ordinance needs strengthening in several areas. A short list of missing elements includes: a provision for interim protection against demolition of eligible properties; affirmative responsibilities with language requiring that a property owner maintain the interior of a property in such a way that the exterior is not affected; and stop-work orders for violations of the ordinance.

Throughout the process of safeguarding historic and archaeological structures and sites, and using the opportunity presented by the newly designated Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail to bolster heritage tourism development, Kent County must take the time to explore funding opportunities. Three such funding sources are described in the following paragraphs.

First, the Maryland Higher Education Commission offers a grant through its Institute for Museum, Preservation, and Archaeology Research and Training program, known as an IMPART grant. According to Office of Grants director Paula Fitzwater, grant amounts range from \$1500 to \$10,000 and are to be used for internships and fellowships in conjunction with an educational program. In my conversation with her, I suggested a program with Washington College for public archaeology centered at Turner's Creek Park and a search for the Tockwogh town documented by Captain John Smith. She responded favorably, saying "I think that's a good project."²² Kent County can suggest this type of funding when working with the college on a program for public archaeology next summer.

Second, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources offers federal funding through a program called "Boating Infrastructure Grant Program". County governments are among eligible applicants to receive money for docking stations, or transient boat slips, provided that the facility is open to the public and the slips are for recreational vessels over 26 feet in length. Up to \$100,000 is available to Maryland for these grants. BIG is a program that could provide a way for boat travelers to

²² Telephone interview, Paula Fitzwater, April 15, 2008

secure their boats and step on land at Turner's Creek Park to enjoy the historical and educational offerings that will be developed there.

Third, the National Trust for Historic Preservation offers grants through its Bartus Trew Providence Preservation Fund, named for a longtime resident of Chestertown, county seat of Kent County. Local governments are eligible to apply. The grant is designed to help with preservation of properties specifically on Maryland's Eastern Shore. The Granary project could be the focus of a grant application.

Conclusion

In this paper, I demonstrated how Kent County can build on and strengthen its efforts in historic preservation by taking action which would complement federal planning for the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. Amended copies of this paper will be prepared for presentation to several interested readers including the following who have requested it:

Kevin Hemstock, editor Kent County News

Sarah Bransom, NPS Gateways office, planner for the Trail

Jeff Troester, Kent County Department of Parks and Recreation

Tim Barrett, David Burke, Joel Dunn - Conservation Fund and Friends of

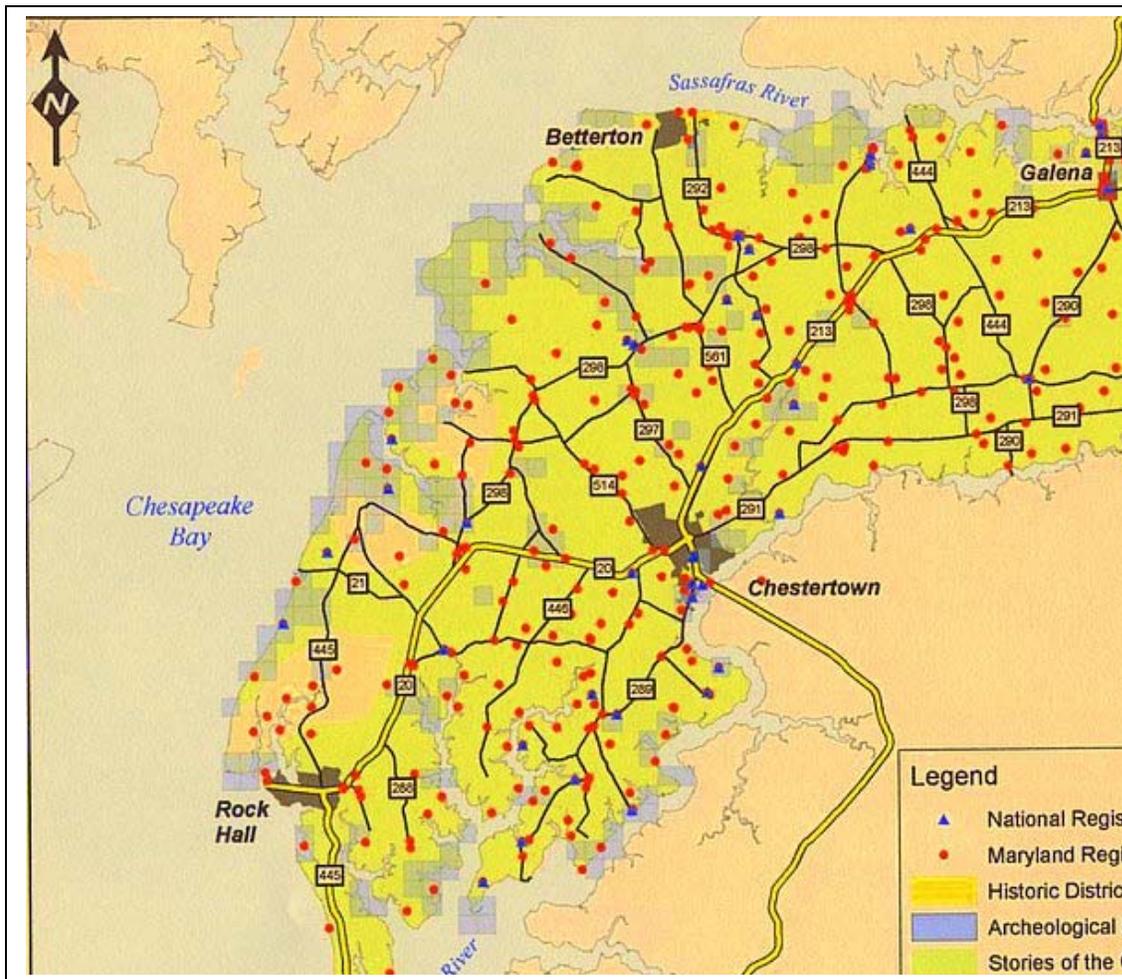
Capt John Smith Trail

John Seidel, Professor, Washington College

In addition, I will seek to present this paper to the Kent County Board of County Commissioners. This research project is more than academic; it has become a call for

action. I hope that Kent County can use this as a catalyst for strengthening its actions in support of its strong stance towards historic preservation as declared in its comprehensive management plan.

Appendices



A map of National Register and Maryland Register Historic Sites in Kent County,
Maryland

Contact information:

Sarah Bransom, Project Manager, Captain John Smith Chesapeake NHT, Chesapeake Bay Program Office, 410-295-3152, email Sarah_Bransom@nps.gov

www.dnr.state.md.us/land/wwi/wwifederalgrants.html For the Boating Infrastructure Grant program

www.impartmd.org For the IMPART grant program

Nell Ziehl, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 202-588-6040 for information concerning the Bartus Trew Grant

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Troester, Jeff, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation, Kent County, Maryland, personal interview, March 19, 2008.

